because that is very,very important. Unless we can upgrade our technology, that is, the indigenous production and manufacture, and the extent to which we can also induce foreign investment in telecom manufacture, I think the full potential of this country cannot be realised.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: So far as part (a) of your question is concerned, at this moment, BSNL has no such proposal to start manufacturing with any company.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: I am not talking of BSNL. I am talking of joint sector..... *(Interruptions)...*

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Let me complete. And please have the patience to listen to my answer. Already, Sir, the ITI has gone through a rough weather. The previous Government, in fact, wanted to close it down; it had taken steps to offer VRS and so on. After the new Government came in, the hon. Prime Minister has allotted Rs. 1001.53 crores to revive the ITI. In fact, it is part of that effort that we have now gone and tied up for ITI with Alcatel from France and they have already supplied one million lines. The remaining three million lines will be manufactured in India by ITI.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next Question. Question No, 329.

Agreements with Iran

*329. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:†

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to send a technical team to Iran by end of March to discuss gas pipeline projects;

(b) if so, whether India and Iran have also decided to explore prospects of setting up economic cooperation and a Special Committee has been constituted in this regard;

(c) if so, what were the other issues discussed by the Iranian Foreign Minister during his visit in February to India;

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

(d) to what extent, both countries have agreed on various issues and whether any agreements have been signed; and

(e) if so, the details of the agreements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (e) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir.

(b) India and Iran already have a Joint Commission which meets regularly at the level of Foreign Ministers. Iranian Foreign Minister Or. Kamal Kharrazi visited New Delhi for the 14th meeting of the Joint Commission on 21-22 February, 2005.

(c) to (e) During the visit, the two sides discussed various bilateral economic, commercial, cultural and consular matters. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the outcome of 14th Joint Commission Meeting was signed by the two sides. Under the MOU, the two sides agreed to take concrete steps to further their cooperation in trade, industry, transport and communication, petroleum, agriculture & rural development, culture, science & technology and consular matters. It was agreed to pursue opportunities for greater cooperation *inter alia* in power sector, mining, small & medium enterprises sector, telecommunications, railways, tourism and Information Technology.

India and Iran also entered into a MOU for safeguarding of their common cultural heritage and have agreed to make matching contributions to a Joint Fund to preserve literature, historical works, cultural and artistic works etc.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I don't want to ask any supplement. I am satisfied with the answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Next Question.

Preparation of a Mega Road Project

*330. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has prepared a mega project